

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A method of establishing a community of practice including as participants a plurality of users, one or more experts, and one or more community of practice managers, the method comprising:
  - identifying a need for the community of practice;
  - identifying roles and responsibilities for participants in the community of practice; and
  - identifying one or more goals for the community of practice, based on the identified need,wherein a plurality of participants in the community of practice collaborate to achieve the identified goals.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of identifying roles and responsibilities includes:
  - identifying one or more community of practice managers;
  - identifying one or more experts associated with the community of practice; and
  - collecting documents to be available to the community of practice.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the identified community of practice managers are not equivalent to the identified experts.
4. The method of claim 2, further including:
  - determining a first security level for the plurality of users;

determining a second security level for the one or more experts;  
and

determining a third security level for the one or more community  
of practice managers.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein the first security level, the  
second security level, and the third security level are not equivalent.

6. The method of claim 1, further including:  
providing training for users in the community of practice.

7. The method of claim 1, further including:  
monitoring progress of the community of practice in achieving the  
identified goals.

8. A method of managing a knowledge management  
architecture for use in a community of practice, the method comprising:  
capturing knowledge from community of practice participants;  
approving the captured knowledge;  
delivering the approved knowledge to community of practice  
participants; and  
maintaining knowledge in a knowledge database,  
wherein the community of practice participants include a plurality  
of users, one or more community of practice managers, and one or more experts  
associated with the community of practice.

9. The method of claim 8, further including:

opening the community of practice.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein the step of opening the community of practice includes:

advertising the community of practice within an organization; and  
accepting subscriptions for membership in the community of practice.

11. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of capturing knowledge includes:

receiving a submission from one of the plurality of users; and  
entering the submission in a document management system,  
wherein the received submission may be in one of a predetermined set of formats.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the step of receiving a submission includes:

receiving, via electronic mail, a knowledge document.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the knowledge document may include a word processing document, a presentation document, a spread sheet document, an electronic mail document, or a link to a Web site.

14. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of approving captured knowledge includes:

identifying a review team;

review of the captured knowledge by the identified review team;  
and  
approval of the captured knowledge, based on an indication from  
the review team.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein the review team includes  
one or more community of practice managers and one or more experts.

16. The method of claim 8, further including:  
accepting feedback about the delivered knowledge from one or  
more participants in the community of practice.

17. The method of claim 16, further including:  
revising the knowledge in the knowledge database based on the  
accepted feedback.

18. A system of managing knowledge in an organization, the  
system comprising:

a community of practice,

wherein the community of practice includes:

a knowledge management architecture;

a plurality of users;

one or more experts;

one or more community of practice managers; and

a network interconnecting the knowledge management  
architecture, the plurality of users, the one or more experts, and the one or more  
community of practice managers, and

wherein the knowledge management architecture includes:

a web server module, connected to the network, for providing tools for use by participants in the community of practice;

a security module, connected to the web server module, for ensuring security requirements are met;

an e-mail server, connected to the web server module and the network, for delivering knowledge to participants in the community of practice;

a knowledge database, connected to the web server module, for storing knowledge entries; and

a document management system, connected to the web server module, for permitting access to documents.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the web server module includes collaboration tools.

20. The system of claim 18, wherein the web server module includes an electronic bulletin board system.

21. The system of claim 18, wherein a plurality of community groups are established within the organization and a plurality of communities of practice are associated with each such community group.

22. A method of establishing a community of practice in a knowledge management system including a knowledge management coordinator, the method comprising:

identifying a need for a community of practice;

obtaining necessary permission from the knowledge management coordinator;  
identifying a community of practice manager and one or more experts for the community of practice;  
identifying existing documentation associated with the community of practice;  
determining at least one security level for the community of practice;  
identifying at least one goal for the community of practice;  
making the community of practice available in the knowledge management system; and  
monitoring the community of practice.

23. The method of claim 22, further including:  
training users to participate in the community of practice.

24. The method of claim 22, further including:  
advertising the community of practice; and  
accepting users for membership in the community of practice.

25. The method of claim 22, wherein the step of monitoring the community of practice includes:  
measuring one or more of: number of users; number of times a knowledge database is accessed; or amount of time to completion of the identified goals.